

## GUIDE TO THE AE5 MIAO FILE

/The Miao (called "Meo" in northern Southeast Asia), with a long history of migration under pressure from the Chinese, are the most widespread of all non-Chinese minority groups originating in southern China. They are found today not only in their traditional center of Kweichow and neighboring provinces, but also in northern Thailand, Laos, and North Vietnam. Throughout this area the Miao are dispersed into isolated, swidden-farming groups hidden away in the more remote mountain valleys and hillsides. In effect these various Miao groups exist as small cultural islands surrounded by peoples of other ethnic background - most notably the lowland wet-rice-growing Chinese and Tai.

There are three main regional divisions of Miao: (1) the South China Miao, who call themselves Hmong, Hmu, or Hmung; they are located mainly in Kweichow province, but also in some adjacent areas of Hunan, Szechwan, Kwangsi, and Yunnan. The principal groups in this region are the Red Miao, Black Miao, Blue Miao, White Miao (known as Ch'uan Miao in southern Szechwan), and the Flowery Miao. There are also numerous smaller groups or subgroups such as the Cowrie Shell Miao and the Sheng Miao (the latter belonging to the Black Miao). Social organization is characterized by patrilocal extended families, patrilineal descent, and patrisibs. Villages are politically independent, but in the past groups have united in a type of loose tribal federation for purposes of military resistance.

(2) The Indochina Meo, who call themselves Miao or Mnong; they are located in North Vietnam and Laos. In northern Vietnam there seem to be five principal groupings: White Meo, Flowered Meo, Red Meo, Black Meo, and Meo Mong Sua. Evidently all have patrilineal kinship systems. In Laos they are most

heavily concentrated in Xieng Khouang province. Some sections have independent villages, whereas others have district chiefs. The White Meo of Laos are described as having exogamous patrilines.

(3) The Thailand Meo, who call themselves H'moong (Mong); they are located mainly in Nan, Chiangrai, and Chiangmai provinces of northern Thailand, but there are scattered settlements as far south as 16°30'N. The majority are evidently either Blue Meo or White Meo. According to Bernatzik (q.v. below), these groups have nonlocalized, exogamous patrilines, but the significant land-owning group is the patrilocal extended family. The village is the highest level of political integration.

Miao and Yao are classed together as a single language family which some linguists tentatively consider to be a separate branch of Sino-Tibetan (for all the above cf. Frank M. LeBar, Gerald C. Hickey, and John K. Musgrave, Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia, 1964: 63-81).

The file consists of 12 sources, four of which are translations from the Chinese. All but two of the sources are based on fieldwork with various groups of South China Miao. 7: Clarke, our earliest source, describes mainly the Miao of Kweichow, but also has chapters on the Chung-chia and Lolo (Nosu). Clarke spent more than 20 years as a missionary in Kweichow. His account focuses on religious life, but includes some information on social organization and relations with the Chinese. 12: Wu and Ch'en describe various groups, particularly two sub-groups of the Hê (Black) Miao: the Short-Skirt Hê (pop. 40-50,000) and the Sheng Miao (pop. ca. 10,000), both in southeastern Kweichow. Detailed data are presented on dress, cultural differences, religion, folklore, and daily life. 6: Ch'en depicts the religious life of the Miao (especially the Ch'ing and Hua Miao) and Chung-chia of the An-shun region of Kweichow. 4: Mickey is a good but brief general ethnography of the Cowrie Shell Miao village of Yang-chia-sai in Lung-li hsien, south central Kweichow, while 5: Hudspeth

presents a brief general cultural description of the Flowery Miao of northwestern Kweichow and northeastern Yunnan (pop. ca. 50,000).

Moving outside of Kweichow, 2: Ling and Ruey present a broad range of ethnographic data on the Miao of western Hunan. Three sources by Graham (nos. 8, 9, and 10) focus on the Ch'uan Miao in southern Szechwan, providing a brief but fairly comprehensive cultural coverage. 11: Yang, Beh, and Morse discuss blood-group distributions among these same Ch'uan Miao, and include a short description of their musical instruments.

It is questionable whether 1: Wang and 3: Moninger should be in this file. Both sources are on the so-called Hainanese Miao, on Hainan Island, but some modern authorities believe these people are probably Yao. Wang presents a general ethnography, while Moninger concentrates on material culture.

In addition to the 12 sources noted above, this file also contains significant amounts of data from sources processed for other files. These data pertain mostly to the Indochina Meo and the Thailand Meo. Perhaps the most extensive data are from 39: Bernatzik in the AO1 Thailand file. Bernatzik did fieldwork with three Miao tribes in Thailand -- the White Meo, Black Meo, and Flowery Meo. 155: Abadie and 158: Diguët, both in the AM1 Indochina file, describe the Meo in the Tonkin area. Abadie says they have a population of about 40,000, the main groups being the White Meo, Black Meo, Red Meo, Meo of the flowers, and Meo-moung-cha. 69: Lewis, AM1 Indochina file, is a more general source on the Meo in northern Vietnam and Laos. It should be added that Bernatzik's material is translated from the German, while Abadie and Diguët are translated from the French./

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